

REMARKS

The Office Action dated October 1, 2009 has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-26 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, 25, and 26 stand rejected. Claims 13-24 have been withdrawn by the Examiner from further consideration.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, 25, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Korean Reference KR2003055965 to Je (hereinafter referred to as “Je”) in view of U.K. Patent Application Publication No. GB2070648 to Huttemann et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Huttemann”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,118,297 to Olding (hereinafter referred to as “Olding”) is respectfully traversed.

In response to the last Amendment submitted by Applicants, the Examiner states, on page 2 of the Office Action, that “Je teaches placement of the diluted additive,” and that “[t]he applicant has failed to show any criticality of the placement of a hose (conduit tube).” On page 3, the Examiner further states that “it has been held that an obvious choice in design, absent any showing of criticality, is not patentable.” Applicants traverse these assertions. Paragraph [0028] of Applicants’ specification describes that “[c]onduit delivers the diluted additive to annular space between tub and basket so that the additive is not applied directly on the articles being washed.” This recitation alone shows the “criticality in the placement of the conduit tube.” As such, Applicants submit that functional advantages associated with the conduit extending into the annular space between the tub and basket are disclosed in Applicants’ specification and, therefore, that the claimed arrangement is not merely a matter of design choice, as asserted by the Examiner.

Moreover, to the extent understood, Je describes a bleach input apparatus for a washing machine. The input apparatus includes a storage unit (40) with a bleaching agent chamber (41) and a softening agent chamber (42). A partition (46) separates the chambers (41 and 42), and a siphon pipe (43 and 43’) extends from an interior of each chamber (40 and 41), respectively, to a pass station (65) of a tub cover (60). Notably, Je does not describe or suggest a reservoir and a conduit that are coupled together and are configured to deliver a diluted additive into an annular space between a tub and a basket.

Huttemann describes a program for controlling a washing machine water inflow. The program includes a washing machine having a drum (1) mounted in a tank (2), a control device (3), a central processor unit (4), and a magnetic valve (6). The magnetic valve (6) opens to allow water flow until a predetermined nominal level (N_1) is reached. Upon reaching N_1 , the magnetic valve (6) is closed and the washing movement of drum (1) begins. During the washing machine movement, the water level in the tank drops due to absorbency. If the water level reaches a reconnection point (N_R), the magnetic valve (6) reopens to restore the water level to N_1 . Notably, Huttemann does not describe or suggest a reservoir and a conduit that are coupled together and are configured to deliver a diluted additive into an annular space between a tub and a basket.

Olding describes an automatic washer that includes a cabinet (20), an outer splash tub (34), an extractor wash tub (32), and a bleaching agent conduit (82). The bleaching agent conduit (82) introduces an undiluted bleaching agent into tub (34) so that the bleaching agent can be diluted inside of tub (34) before coming into contact with clothes within tub (32). (Column 3, Lines 21-63). Notably, Olding does not describe or suggest a reservoir and a conduit that are coupled together and are configured to deliver a diluted additive into an annular space between a tub and a basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, and defining an annular space between the tub and the basket. The additive dispensing system includes “a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover, and configured to contain an additive; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into the annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and the annular space, and configured to deliver a diluted additive into the annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to: activate said water valve, said water valve configured to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and raise a fluid level of the diluted additive in said reservoir to a level to initiate a siphoning action of the diluted additive to fill and flush said reservoir, said conduit configured to deliver the diluted additive to the annular space; automatically adjust a dispense time to dispense the diluted additive corresponding to at least one of a selected wash cycle of a plurality of wash cycles and a user adjustment made during the selected wash cycle; and dispense the diluted

additive to the washing machine at the adjusted dispense time by delivering the diluted additive into the annular space through said conduit.”

No combination of Je, Huttemann, and Olding describes or suggests an additive dispensing system for a washing machine as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Je, Huttemann, and Olding describes or suggests a reservoir and a conduit that are coupled together and are configured to deliver a diluted additive into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket. Rather, in contrast, Je merely describes an input apparatus for a washing machine that includes a storage unit with a bleaching agent chamber, a softening agent chamber, and a siphon pipe that extends from an interior of each chamber to a pass station of a tub cover, Huttemann describes a program for controlling a washing machine water inflow, and Olding describes a conduit for delivering undiluted bleaching agent directly into a tub so that the bleaching agent can be diluted after the bleaching agent is already in the tub.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is submitted as being patentable over Je in view Huttemann and further in view of Olding.

Claims 3-6 and 26 depend from Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3-6 and 26 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3-6 and 26 are likewise patentable over Je in view of Huttemann and further in view of Olding.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine that includes “a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket positioned within said tub for holding articles to be washed, an annular space defined between said tub and said basket; and an additive dispensing system comprising: a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover, and configured to contain an additive; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; a conduit coupled to said reservoir and extending into the annular space, said conduit providing fluid communication between said reservoir and the annular space, and configured to deliver a diluted additive into the annular space; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to: activate said water valve, said water valve configured to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and raise a fluid level of the diluted additive in said reservoir to a level to initiate a siphoning action of the diluted additive to fill and flush said reservoir, said conduit configured to deliver the diluted additive to the annular space; automatically adjust a dispense time to dispense the

diluted additive corresponding to at least one of a selected wash cycle of a plurality of wash cycles and a user adjustment made during the selected wash cycle; and dispense the diluted additive to the washing machine at the adjusted dispense time by delivering the diluted additive into the annular space through said conduit.”

No combination of Je, Huttemann, and Olding describes or suggests a washing machine as recited in Claim 7. More specifically, no combination of Je, Huttemann, and Olding describes or suggests a reservoir and a conduit that are coupled together and are configured to deliver a diluted additive into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket. Rather, in contrast, Je merely describes an input apparatus for a washing machine that includes a storage unit with a bleaching agent chamber, a softening agent chamber, and a siphon pipe that extends from an interior of each chamber to a pass station of a tub cover, Huttemann describes a program for controlling a washing machine water inflow, and Olding describes a conduit for delivering undiluted bleaching agent directly into a tub so that the bleaching agent can be diluted after the bleaching agent is already in the tub.

Accordingly, Claim 7 is submitted as being patentable over Je in view of Huttemann and further in view of Olding.

Claims 9-12 depend from Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9-12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9-12 are likewise patentable over Je in view of Huttemann and further in view of Olding.

Claim 25 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, and defining an annular space between the tub and the basket. The additive dispensing system includes “a reservoir cover comprising a plurality of tabs extending from said reservoir cover, said plurality of tabs configured to engage a top cover of the washing machine; a reservoir removably coupled to said reservoir cover, and configured to contain an additive, said reservoir comprising a conduit; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to: activate said water valve, said water valve configured to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and raise a fluid level of the diluted additive in said reservoir to a level to initiate a siphoning action of

the diluted additive to fill and flush said reservoir, said conduit configured to deliver the diluted additive to the annular space.”

No combination of Je, Huttemann, and Olding describes or suggests an additive dispensing system for a washing machine as recited in Claim 25. More specifically, no combination of Je, Huttemann, and Olding describes or suggests a reservoir and a conduit configured to deliver a diluted additive into an annular space defined between a tub and a basket. Rather, in contrast, Je merely describes an input apparatus for a washing machine that includes a storage unit with a bleaching agent chamber, a softening agent chamber, and a siphon pipe that extends from an interior of each chamber to a pass station of a tub cover, Huttemann describes a program for controlling a washing machine water inflow, and Olding describes a conduit for delivering undiluted bleaching agent directly into a tub so that the bleaching agent can be diluted after the bleaching agent is already in the tub.

Accordingly, Claim 25 is submitted as being patentable over Je in view of Huttemann and further in view of Olding.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, 25, and 26 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all of the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric T. Krischke
Registration No. 42,769
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070